

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows.

1. (Currently amended) A Method of mounting a retaining ring (21) on a rotating electric starter shaft of an electric (17), ~~comprising a starter drive assembly (10) that includes a self-disengaging coupling device (12) acting between the a bushing (18) and the a pinion (11), the bushing (18) and the shaft (17) having splines (15, 16) that cooperate, and which the~~ shaft having a first rear stop (21) and a second front stop (22) spaced apart thereon the shaft to define the a course along which the starter drive assembly (10) slides between the a rest and a working positions, said first rear stop being formed by said an elastic retaining ring (21) inserted into an annular positioning groove (23) of the shaft, ~~which the method is characterized in that comprising:~~

[[•]] mounting in a first step the retaining ring (21) ~~is mounted on~~ an axial segment (27) of the shaft in an accessible mounting area between the positioning groove (23) and the splines (15); and

[[•]] moving and in a second step, the starter drive assembly (10) ~~is moved axially toward the rest position so as to move the retaining ring (21) along the axial segment of the shaft (27) to the positioning groove (23), which is made located~~ in a service area with no radial access.

2. (Currently amended) A Mounting method according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that wherein~~ the service area for ~~seating the retaining ring (21)~~ is disposed beneath a protrusion (26) of the a speed reducer (13).

3. (Currently amended) A Mounting method according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that wherein~~ a shaft segment (27) with a cross section that increases toward the positioning groove (23) is used.

4. (Currently amended) An Electric starter for a motor vehicle equipped with a starter drive assembly (10) comprising:

___ a bushing (18);
___ a pinion (11); and

a self-disengaging coupling device (12) between the bushing (18) and the pinion (11); ~~which~~
~~and~~

 a shaft ~~hasvng~~ a first rear stop (21) and a second front stop (22) spaced apart thereon the shaft to define ~~the~~ a course along which the starter drive assembly (10) slides between ~~the~~ a rest and a working positions, ~~said~~ the first rear stop being formed by ~~said~~ an elastic retaining ring (21) inserted into an annular positioning groove (23) of the shaft,

~~characterized in that~~ wherein the positioning groove (23) is placed in a private service area with radial access, and below a protrusion (26) from ~~the~~ a speed reducer (13) enclosed by ~~the~~ a housing (50) of the electric motor.

5. (Currently amended) An ~~E~~electric starter according to claim 4, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the positioning groove (23) ~~has~~ a front face (28) ~~intended~~ configured to axially block the retaining ring (21) in the service area.

6. (Currently amended) An ~~E~~electric starter according to claim 5, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the positioning groove (23) is delimited opposite the front face (28) by an annular stop face (29), the width of which is greater than that of the front face (28).

7. (Currently amended) An ~~E~~electric starter according to claim 6, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the axial length of the groove (23) separating the front face (28) from the annular stop face (29) is selected in order to seat one or more elastic retaining rings (21).

8. (Currently amended) An ~~E~~electric starter according to claim 6 ~~or 7~~, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the positioning groove (23) is axially separated from the splines (15) of the shaft (17) of the starter drive assembly by a conically shaped segment (27) of the shaft, the diameter (D1) of the side of the splines (15) being less than the diameter (D2) near the front face (28) of ~~said~~ the positioning groove.

9. (Currently amended) An ~~E~~electric starter according to claim 4, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the self-disengaging coupling device (12) consists of a freewheel.

10. (New) An electric starter according to claim 7, wherein the positioning groove is axially separated from the splines of the shaft of the starter drive assembly by a conically shaped segment of the shaft, the diameter (D1) of the side of the splines being less than the diameter (D2) near the front face of the positioning groove.